

CHAPTER 33

Conditions

To understand conditions and conditional sentences, we need some specialized terminology. There is no easy way to do this, so you're going to have to spend some time up front getting familiar with them. After a basic introduction to conditional sentences, we'll look at conditional sentences in Latin and their formulae.

CONDITIONAL STATEMENTS IN ENGLISH

A conditional sentence has two parts: the subordinate "if" clause, called the "**protasis**" (PRAH ta sis) of the condition, and the main "then" clause, called the "**apodosis**" (a PAH da sis) of the condition. The protasis states the condition under which the main clause will be (will not be), is being (is not being), or was (was not), fulfilled :

PROTASIS	APODOSIS
If it is raining outside	then the grass is wet.
If you saw him yesterday	then he must have been here.

There are basically two kinds of conditional sentences, categorized by the expectation the speaker has concerning the possibility of the fulfillment of the condition stated in the protasis :

OPEN OR SIMPLE CONDITIONS

- A. The speaker may be making no implication as to whether the condition was (not), is (not) being, or will (not) be, fulfilled.
These conditions are called "**open**" or "**simple**" conditions.

- "If x approaches 0, then the value of $f(x)$ approaches infinity."
(Notice that the speaker is not implying that it is doubtful that x is approaching 200, but if it is, then the apodosis holds true.)
- "If you saw him yesterday, then he was here."
(The speaker is not doubting or suggesting that you did not see him yesterday, but if you did, then he was here.)
- "If you come tomorrow, I will be happy."
(Again, the speaker is not saying that it is unlikely that you will come tomorrow, but if you do, then... When a simple or open condition applies to a future event, it is often called the "**future-more-vivid**," or the "**future real**" condition.)

UNREAL CONDITIONS

- B. The speaker may be implying or explicitly stating that the condition stated in the protasis will not be, is not, or was not fulfilled. These category of conditions are sometimes called the "**unreal**" conditions, and are further broken down into the time to which the conditions are being applied.

- When the protasis applies to a future event, these conditions are called "**future-less-vivid**," "**future unreal**" or "**should-would**" condition.

"If you should come (or were to come) tomorrow, then I would be happy."
(The speaker doubts that you will come, but if you should, then he would be happy.)

- When an unreal condition pertains to a present condition that is not being fulfilled, it is called the "**present contrary-to-fact**" condition.

"If you were eight and a half feet tall, you would be a great basketball player."
(But you are not eight feet tall, so you are not a great basketball player. But if you were...)

3. When an unreal condition pertains to a past condition that was not fulfilled, it is called the "**past contrary-to-fact**" condition.

"If George had been there, we would have won the game."
(But he was not there, so we did not win the game. But if he had been there...)

Let's summarize the basic formulae for English conditional sentences. Notice that it is the change in tense and mood in the protasis which indicates the kind of condition of the sentences.

I. Simple or Open Conditions

PROTASIS	APODOSIS	CONDITION
pres. indic.	fut. indic.	FUTURE MORE VIVID
pres. indic.	pres. indic.	PRESENT SIMPLE
past. indic.	past indic.	PAST SIMPLE

II. Unreal (and Contrary to Fact) Conditions

PROTASIS	APODOSIS	CONDITION
should, were to	would	FUTURE LESS VIVID
imperf. indic.	would	PRESENT CONTRARY TO FACT
plperf. indic.	would have	PAST CONTRARY TO FACT

REVIEW

Classify the following conditional statements:

1. I will be most appreciative if you try your best on the exam. [We often omit the "then" of the apodosis.]

2. If Captain Kangaroo said it, it must have been true.

3. If the bendix drive is bent, the car will not start.

4. If the song were in the key of G flat minor, then you would be singing the right note.

5. Had I known that the teacher would be back next term, I would not have written such acidic comments on the course review.

CONDITIONAL STATEMENTS IN LATIN

The same classification of conditional sentences which you just learned for English conditions applies to Latin conditions as well. Here is a table of the formulae for standard Latin conditions.

I. OPEN OR SIMPLE CONDITIONS

PROTASIS	APODOSIS	CONDITION
future indic.	future indic.	FUTURE MORE VIVID
present indic.	present indic.	PRESENT OPEN
past indic.	past indic.	PAST OPEN

II. UNREAL CONDITIONS

PROTASIS	APODOSIS	CONDITION
present subj.	present subj.	FUTURE LESS VIVID
imperf. subj.	imperf. subj.	PRES. CONTRARY TO FACT
plpf. subj.	plpf. subj.	PAST CONTRARY TO FACT

One feature you should notice about these formulae is that the simple conditions all have the indicative mood in the protasis, whereas all the unreal conditions have the subjunctive mood in the protasis. If you can remember this, you'll be better able to untangle conditional sentences when you're reading.

If the mood of the verb in the protasis is in the indicative, then the condition is one of the simple or open conditions.

Further refinement of the condition is then determined by the tense of the verb in the protasis. For example, if the mood of the verb in the protasis is indicative and in the future tense, then the condition is future more vivid.

If the mood of the verb in the protasis is in the subjunctive, then the condition is one of the unreal conditions.

Again, further classification of the condition is determined by the tense of the verb in the protasis. For example, if the mood of the verb is subjunctive and its tense is present, then the condition is future less vivid.

Let's look at some examples.

1. "*Si hoc faciet, beatus ero.*"

Because the protasis is the indicative mood, it is a simple condition - one that does not imply any doubt about the fulfillment of the condition stated in the protasis.

Because the tense of the protasis is future, the condition is a "**future open**" - a condition which is also called a "**future real**," or "**future-more-vivid**."

Tr. "If he does this, then I will be happy."

Notice that in the Latin future-more-vivid, the protasis is future, whereas the English is present.

2. "*Si hoc facit, beatus sum.*"

Present simple or open.

Tr. "If he is doing this, then I am happy."

3. "*Si hoc fecit, beatus eram.*"

Past simple or open.

Tr. "If he did this, I was happy."

4. "*Si hoc faciat, beatus sim.*"

Now the mood of the protasis is subjunctive, so you have one of the unreal conditions.

Since the tense is present, the condition is a future less vivid, and is represented in English with "should-would."

Tr. "If he should do this [I doubt he will], I would be happy."

5. "*Si hoc faceret, beatus essem.*"
The mood is subjunctive and the tense is imperfect, so this is a present contrary to fact condition.
Tr. "If he were doing this [but he is not], I would be happy [but I'm not]."
6. "*Si hoc fecisset, beatus fuisset.*"
Pluperfect subjunctive in the protasis, so this is a past contrary to fact condition.
Tr. "If he had done this [but he did not, I would have been happy [but I wasn't]."

REVIEW

To establish the kind condition in a Latin conditional sentence, follow these simple steps:

1. Find the protasis.
2. Establish whether the mood is subjunctive or indicative.
 - a. If the mood of the verb in the protasis is indicative, then you have one of the simple or open conditions; find the tense.
 - i. If it is future, the condition is future-more-vivid (also called the future real).
 - ii. If it is present tense, the condition is present simple or open.
 - iii. If it is a past tense, the condition is the past simple or open.
 - b. If it is subjunctive, find the tense.
 - i. If the tense is present, the condition is future-less-vivid (also called "should-would" or future unreal).
 - ii. If the tense is imperfect, the condition is present contrary-to-fact.
 - iii. If the tense is pluperfect, the condition is past contrary-to-fact.

I strongly suggest that you go to Wheelock's self-help tutorial on pages 315-6 and work through the list of conditional sentences. The only way to internalize these rules is to practice applying them constantly. Ask yourself what kind of condition the sentence is before you translate a single word. Also, practice writing out the basic formulae for the Latin conditional sentences until you have them thoroughly memorized.

VOCABULARY PUZZLES

quis, quid When the indefinite pronoun "*aliquis, aliquid*" is preceded in the sentence by "*si,*" "*nisi,*" "*num,*" or "*ne,*" then the "ali-" drops off, leaving just the inflected endings "*quis, quid.*" Consequently, "*si quis*" means "*if someone,*" "*nisi quid*" means "*unless something,*" etc. The way I remembered the rule was this little jingle:

"After *si, nisi, num,* and *ne*
Then the ali- falls away."